Correspondence.

"And alteram partem."

THE SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES OF LONDON.  
To the Editor of The Lancet.

Sir,—As there appears to have been some mis-apprehension in certain quarters as to the effect of the recent discontinuance of the trading operations of the Society of Apothecaries, I am directed to ask if you will be so good as to allow me to state exactly what has taken place.

The Society has discontinued both its wholesale and retail trade in the manner which has already been announced in the press, but has made no other change whatever. Its work and duties as a Medical and Surgical Licensing Body examining for and conferring the Diploma of L.M.S.S.A., and also the granting of a Certificate in Dispensing, continue as hitherto, and will be in no way affected by the discontinuance of the Society’s trading operations.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

BINGHAM WATSON,
Clerk to the Society of Apothecaries of London.

NEGligible GLYCOSURIA.  
To the Editor of The Lancet.

Sir,—True synonyms may be useful in poetry but should be banished from medical literature, because confusion would result from using the words the meanings of which must be acquired by the student is appalling and increasing daily. The three terms, "renal glycosuria," "diabetes innocens," and "glycosuria without hyperglycaemia," are at the moment used synonymously. I venture to suggest that the term describing these—i.e., "negligible glycosuria"—would be a wise substitute for the three names.

The Term "Renal Glycosuria."

The origin of the term renal glycosuria seems to be due to the fact that the first published cases of glycosuria without any excess of sugar in the blood happened to have albuminuria, and the assumption was made that the kidney was at fault. Subsequently many cases were recorded of glycosuria with neither albuminuria nor hyperglycaemia, and the name diabetes innocens was adopted. The objection to the term diabetes innocens is that diabetes means "a flowing through," a polyuria; this is not a feature of the condition. Renal glycosuria seems to prove to be a suitable name for the condition, but evidence is insufficient at the moment. The term "renal threshold" is used to designate the concentration of sugar in the blood above which the kidney is unable to prevent its secretion. A renal threshold of some 0'19 per cent., whilst of others 0'17 per cent., after a meal fairly rich in carbohydrates and that, therefore, the blood-sugar of a patient suffering from diabetes mellitus may fall below 0'15 per cent. some time after food or after a suitable meal. This, too, is a feature of the condition I shall give details of the two which seem to me to form the end-links of a chain.

The Low Renal Threshold.

The essential characteristic of negligible glycosuria is the very low renal threshold for dextrose. I have written that if the kidney secretes urine containing a recognisable quantity of sugar whilst the blood circulating through it does not contain more than 0'15 per cent. dextrose, one may assume that the condition is negligible. It is easy to see why dieting or fasting of a person who is suffering to have negligible glycosuria may lead to a temporary diminution in energy, a slight inconvenience compared with the disaster resulting from overfeeding even for a short time a case of diabetes mellitus—a disaster, because even if it does not lead to the early death of the patient it will cause not only progress of the disease but also a diminution of his tolerance which will detract from the enjoyment of the time he has upon this earth.

1 Hamburger: The Lancet, Nov. 19th, 1921, p. 1042.
3 Leyton, O. : The Practitioner, February, 1922.
4 The Lancet, April 15th, 1922, p. 135.